

League of Women Voters California Position on Water

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POSITION IN BRIEF: *Support measures which promote the management and development of water resources in ways that are beneficial to the environment with emphasis on conservation and high standards of water quality that are appropriate for the intended use.*

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POSITIONS

Planning and Management of Water Resources

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1. Support measures that:

- a. coordinate water resource planning with land use planning and provide for future needs without encouraging growth;
- b. protect the natural environment in areas of both water origin and water use;
- c. reserve stream flows for protection of fish and wildlife habitat and other in-stream uses;
- d. preserve wild and scenic rivers;
- e. encourage off-stream storage; discourage additional onstream dams;
- f. provide for assessment of economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits of water projects;
- g. discourage water contracting and marketing policies which build up demand and establish rigid patterns of distribution and use;
- h. encourage a variety of water supply sources with emphasis on nonstructural alternatives;
- i. develop and maintain a statewide inventory of ground and surface water supplies and a centralized database to evaluate current and potential needs, demands, and uses;
- j. require that documents present clear, concise information, readily available to the public.

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Water Quality Control

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2. Support measures that:

- a. give state and regional boards responsibility for setting water quality standards that may be higher than

minimum federal standards;

b. give state and regional water quality control boards sufficient authority and adequate budget and staff to establish and enforce water quality standards;

c. promote coordination of regional water quality control boards with other agencies concerned with both water quality and quantity.

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Surface and Groundwater Supplies

3. To ensure protection and efficient use of groundwater and surface water supplies, the state should:

a. modify water rights law to facilitate coordinated management and use of surface and groundwater resources;

b. develop and enforce policies, standards, and guidelines to coordinate basin-wide groundwater and surface water management;

c. identify local, basin, or regional groundwater management areas;

d. set and enforce standards for groundwater management with local, basin, or regional development and implementation of plans tailored to the carrying capacity and characteristics of each basin;

e. review management plans periodically to assure compliance with state mandated policies, standards, and guidelines;

f. have a statewide program for groundwater management.

Fiscal Objectives

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4. Support measures that:

a. require fish and wildlife enhancement, flood control, and recreation costs be borne by the general taxpayer;

b. require other costs be paid by the water and power users;

c. encourage water pricing policies which reflect development and delivery costs;

d. protect low or fixed income water users by lifeline rates;

e. encourage flexible water contracts to reflect costs and benefits more accurately.

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Conservation

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5. Support measures that:

- a. encourage conservation by all categories of water users through pricing policies, technical assistance, metering, education, and changes in water rights law;
- b. require rationing in emergency situations only;
- c. encourage the use of reclaimed water for power plant cooling, groundwater recharge, agricultural, and landscape irrigation;
- d. require water conservation as a condition placed on the delivery and use of water for agriculture;
- e. require implementation of conservation measures before inter-basin transfer of water should be made available.

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Protection of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and San Francisco Bay Estuary Ecosystem

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6. Support measures that:

- a. increase water conservation and promote waste water reclamation to minimize reliance on water exported through and around the Delta;
- b. foster federal and state coordination and cooperation over all Delta operation and management;
- c. require federal and state entities to abide by high water quality standards;
- d. set limits on the amount of water to be exported through or around the Delta;
- e. require strong, binding environmental safeguards as a part of any cross Delta transfer system.

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Adopted 1959; Updated 1961, 1967, 1971, 1979; Readopted at the last convention